

*Fifth Sunday of Easter*  
*Homily ~ May 21-22, 2011*

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*Davison, Michigan*

*U.S. News and World Report* did a poll recently of one thousand respondents and they asked this question: “Who do you think is ‘very likely’ or ‘somewhat likely’ to go to heaven?”

Of all the celebrities, the biggest vote-getter was Mother Teresa at 79%. Who came in second? Oprah Winfrey at 66%. When it came to politicians, the figures began to plummet. President Obama and Hilary Clinton each scored 45%. The biggest vote-getter was all those who were surveyed, because more than 87% of Americans surveyed believed they were most likely to go to heaven.

Now when it comes to surveys, I am reminded of a teacher who was teaching her children how to spell. So she told the class she wanted each one of them to tell what their father did for a living and then spell his occupation.

Well, a girl named Mary went first. She said, “My dad is a baker, B-A-K-E-R; and if he were here, he would give everyone a cookie.”

Next came Tommy. He said, “My dad is a banker, B-A-N-K-E-R; and if he were here, he would give each one of us a quarter.”

The third kid was Jimmy. He said, “My dad is an electrician. He attempted several times to spell that word, but he just couldn’t do it. Finally, the teacher asked him to think about it while she called on somebody else. She then turned to little Johnny.

He said, “My dad is a bookie, B-O-O-K-I-E; and if he were here, he would lay you eight-to-five that Jimmy ain’t never gonna spell electrician!”

Now if I were Johnny’s dad, I would lay you about any odds you want to gamble that there are a lot of people who think they are going to heaven and who are in for a big surprise!

You see, there are three things that are absolutely necessary if anybody is going to heaven.

First of all, you must **believe** in heaven.

Secondly, you must **want** to go to heaven.

But most importantly, you must **know** the way to heaven.

There is only one way to heaven. It is not your way, nor is it my way. It is God's way.

Jesus had just finished telling his disciples that he was going to heaven. He said he was going there to prepare a place for them, so that he could spend eternity with them in heaven. Thomas then asked Jesus how to get there. He said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

Jesus gave him not just an answer, but the single greatest statement about the way to heaven and how to know you are on the way to heaven in all of the Bible. He said:

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me."*

The great Catholic theologian, Thomas a Kempis, caught the meaning of Jesus' words and had this to say:

*"Without the way, there is no going; without the truth,  
there is no knowing; and without the life, there is no living."*

I heard about a man from the city who was out in the country and got lost. He saw a farmer sitting on the front porch of his cabin. He walked up to him and said, "Sir, is this the best way to the city?" The old farmer drawled, "Nope, it's the only way to the city."

God has created each of us for a purpose. Life has a goal to it. Each of us is created to travel through life toward an end, and the way to that end is through him. Follow Jesus.

Jesus also said, "*I am the truth.*" We are living in a day when the Holy Trinity has been replaced by the earthly trinity of education, information, and knowledge. Today we bow before our computers and worship at the Shrine of Technology.

What will it matter if you managed all of the sciences, memorized all of history, and mastered all of the languages, and yet missed out on the greatest truth that Jesus is the Truth?

Finally, Jesus says, "*I am the life.*"

If you don't have Jesus, you don't have life, because he is the life. He said, *"I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."*

Now there are basically three types of people in this world:

1. There are people who have no purpose in life. They are born; they live; they die; and it's all over.
2. Then there are people who have the wrong purpose in life. They are climbing the ladders of financial, political, social, and even religious success. But they don't realize that their ladders are leaning against the wrong wall.
3. But then there are those who have found the right purpose in life because they have found the only person who can give not only years to your life, but life to your years.


That's why religion and Christianity are so totally different. You can have religion without Jesus, but you cannot have Christianity without Christ. You can be a Buddhist without know Buddha. You can be a Muslim without knowing Mohammed. You can be a Confucianist without knowing Confucius. But you cannot be a Christian without knowing Christ.

To the lost person, Jesus is the Way. To the learning person, he is the Truth. To the longing person, he is the Life.

Jesus made it plain that—

*"Without me there is no going, for I am the Way.  
Without me there is no knowing, for I am the Truth.  
Without me there is no growing, for I am the Life."*

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